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ABSTRACT

Issues in statewide planning for the provision of postsecondary education to adult students are considered. Developments that have resulted in commitment to lifelong learning by the federal government, state governments, and institutions are noted, including declining enrollments. Lifelong learning has been regarded as many things: off-campus instruction, service to part-time students, and nontraditional learning. It can be credit or noncredit, examination for credit, or credit for life experiences. Lifelong learning is often classified on the basis of the delivery system and in terms of target audiences. The California master plan, the community college five-year plan, and other plans within the state are briefly described in terms of their consideration of adult students. Some persepctives on planning are offered, including the following: there is a need for diversity in institutions, instructional methods, and subject matter; planning should be evaluated and coordinated; the planning function should be shared by participants at all levels; and there will never be a perfectly meshed plan, given the federal, state, and local levels of bureaucracy and other differences. Suggested questions that state planners need to consider include: how to weigh individual educational needs; the extent to which duplication will be permitted; whether planning will be conducted only for areas requiring tax dollars; how to guarantee quality; how detailed a plan should be; whether the planning will promote diversity of learning; whether plans should include the estabishment of new institutions or agenices to reach the new adult audiences; and the extent to which institutions should seek out new audiences. (SW)

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STATE PLANNING FOR ADULT LEARNERS

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"State Planning for Adult Learners"

by

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At long last, the Congress and the federal government have awakened to the fact that there are other people out there in the vast educational wasteland besides the traditional 18-to-22 year-old students who inundated the colleges and universities during the 1950's and 1960's.

The magic ingredient in the new educational concoction being brewed by the federal government is the adult. The buzz words these days are "continuing education," "adult education," "extension," and the relatively new, popular, and rather grandiloquent term, "lifelong learning."

Typically, the government has fragmented its solutions. The 1976 Education Amendments concentrated on the adult population in an unparalled way. While not yet a tidal wave of support, the waves are higher than they have ever been.

Title I of the Higher Education Act of 1965, which had been deleted in every presidential budget in recent years (and restored by the Congress each time) has again become respectable with President Carter's inclusion of the $12.5 million in his budget changes from the Ford budget. Not only does the community service provision start out with a leg up in the process this year by being included in the

President's budget at the outset, there is now added a section on lifelong learning. The new section, Title I, Part B, of the 1976 Amendments, is all encompassing. Lifelong learning embraces adult basic education, continuing education, independent study, agricultural education, business education and labor education, occupational education and job training programs, parent education, postsecondary education, preretirement education and education for older and retired people, remedial education, special educational programs for groups or individuals with special needs...

To help plan for such new audiences, $20 million for fiscal year 1977, $30 million for fiscal year 1978, and $40 million for fiscal year 1979 is authorized in the legislation.

In another Title, the Amendments authorize $20 million in 1977, $30 million in 1978, and $40 million in 1979 to plan for Educational Information Centers for all citizens where they could learn about financial aid, training programs, job placement opportunities, guidance and counseling, and remedial tutorial programs.

Title X authorizes $15 million to be spent in planning for improvement and expansion of community colleges, rapidly becoming adult-oriented in the last few years. Although none of these programs is currently funded, the probability of funding in the next year or so is pretty good.

The Vocational Education Amendments of 1976 also call for participation of various postsecondary institutions and segments in statewide planning to a much greater extent than ever before and thus complicate an already complicated field. The Fund for the Improvement

of Postsecondary Education, with modest appropriations since 1973, has given high priority in awarding grants to the development of new programs and services for new student clienteles, including community advisement centers, brokering operations, and new forms of higher education.

All these mix and match with other federal programs which have long reflected the energies and lobbying abilities of education's special interests -- Cooperative Extension, Vocational Education, Comprehensive Employment and Training (CETA) programs, to mention only a few.

In 1975, the National Advisory Commission on Extension and Adult Education listed 23 federal agencies that had identifiable separate continuing education and extension programs. They spent over 8 billion dollars!

Not bad for openers.

State governments, too, have discovered lifelong learning. In almost every state, this new concern is reflected in studies, laws, and enlarged budgets to understand and attend to the needs of that huge segment of the population -- adults -- not now served by postsecondary education institutions.

At the institutional level, steady-state and declining enrollments have turned administrators and faculty completely around from their previous contempt or passive acceptance of extension or continuing education. (One wag calls lifelong learning "full employment for faculty.")

Now that the federal government, state government, and institutions have discovered that lifelong learning is respectable,

desirable, and financially rewarding, what are we to expect? More billions for lifelong learning?...or reallocation of present resources? Now that we've found all these new students -- (read "adults") and new needs (read "money") how are we to plan for this gigantic enterprise?

In the old days, most institutions had an extension or adult education division. Most programs were on a self-supporting basis; they were usually administered in old houses on the back lots of the campuses. There was no reward system to encourage faculty to participate, and very little access to the institution's administration, and practically no concern or attention by the institution's governing boards.

Now, all that promises to change. But before we start throwing money at the problem, it is time to consider seriously how we plan to handle our new, underserved audiences.

The problem of lifelong learning is complicated by the confusion in definitions. Knock on any door and you will get a different response. Some regard it as off-campus instruction, some as service to part-time students, and still others as nontraditional learning. It can be credit or noncredit, for matriculated or nonmatriculated students, have a degree orientation or a no degreee objective. It may be validation, or examination for credit, or credit for life experiences.

Lifelong learning is often classified on the basis of the delivery system: television, correspondence study, TV and the electronic media, or independent study. It is often defined in terms of target

audiences: how to reach the wage earner at different times and in different places, how to get to the geographically remote, the incarcerated, the minorities, and those with low incomes. Slicing across all these definitions are motivations: those adults who want upward mobility, retraining, a second chance at college, career changes, citizenship, problem-solving abilities, or merely to learn for the sake of learning.

No wonder there is confusion.

And what are the plans for all these activities? At a recent conference, I heard an estimate that the feds require about 50 state plans. That's state plans. Fifty state plans for each of the 50 states. The programs established or amended by the 1976 amendments themselves call for seven plans and three of them are new.

Let's take it down to the state level -- I'll use my own state, California, as an example. In 1960, California established its celebrated Master Plan which has guided us through the years. The Plan assigned certain functions to each of our three public segments of higher education. The University of California would draw from the top 12-1/2 percent of the high school graduating class and hold as its private preserve, all education beyong the master's degree and all professional schools, such as law, medicine, veterinary science, etc. The California State University and Colleges would draw from the top 33-1/3 percent of the high school graduating class and teach through the baccalaureate and the master's degree in some subjects. The Community Colleges would admit any high school graduate (and others who could profit from the instruction offered) -- tuition free -- with a guarantee of transfer

to the four-year segments if they earned satisfactory grades.

The Master Plan has worked well for the objectives of 1960. But the Plan did not address itself to the question of who would handle the adults and where the money would come from.

Consequently, California's Community Colleges today have a headcount enrollment of 1,400,000 students, the vast majority of whom are adults and not from the traditional 18-22 year old college-going population.

And the Community Colleges have a statewide five-year plan of their own, aimed at new modes of learning, new and flexible time schedules, and new flexible programs -- primarily aimed at a more variable adult population.

The University of California has a plan which includes extension and adult education. So does the California State University and Colleges system. Who else is in the act? Many: the State Department of Education, the unified school districts, independent institutions, proprietary schools, the federally financed Regional Occupation Program (ROPs), the State Department of Finance, various committees of the Legislature, and, lastly, my own organization, the California Postsecondary Education Commission.

We, too, have a five-year statewide plan that leans heavily on the subject of lifelong learning. We are conducting studies of adult education, the part-time student, community college finance, regional planning councils, regional advisement centers, and the related subject of brokering -- a new term (read "counseling").

But that's not all. At the regional level, there is planning (and some implementation) for segments to work together to reach

First, I assume there are limited tax resources at every level — federal, state, and local. When higher education goes out of fashion, it is seldom on any government's priority list of problems or challenges. Education's competition for tax dollars with other tax supported state and local agencies is increasing.

Second, I believe that diversity is good. That is what has made American higher education unique in the world. That diversity extends to institutions, methods of instruction, subject matter, philosophies, and value systems. Conformity and standardization in education would bring a dreadful mediocrity — the antithesis of change and progress.

Third, planning must be accompanied by some modicum of evaluation and coordination. This assumption is the one most debated by the educational establishment. If you tell me where the person stands in that establishment, I can predict with surprising accuracy where he stands on the planning-coordination issue. Institutions tend to see planning as the integration of their plans. At the other end of the spectrum, agencies generally see state planning as the plans they do themselves and they see state evaluation and coordination as necessary corollaries.

Fourth, I assume that the planning function must be shared, and that, in general, consent of the governed is still a cardinal rule. Not only should participants at all levels — students, faculty, and administrators, be involved, but so also should those who, by law, are designated planners, and those who finance the ventures.

Fifth, my most fundamental assumption is that we will never have a perfectly meshed plan, given the federal, state, and local

adults through external degrees, with TV (there are eight TV consortiums in the State), and with systemwide access through the "1000-mile-campus" of the California State University and College with its 19 campuses.

And last year, our Legislature mandated planning at the Community district level by setting up regional and vocational education councils to avoid duplication between the unified school districts and the Community Colleges.

This is all probably more than anyone wants to know about California's multiple planning processes. Yet, I hazard a guess that most other states are into it as deep as we are, or soon will be.

So, with everyone into the act of planning for the adult throughout his or her life, we at the state level -- either as coordinating and planning groups, or as 1202 commissions (a federally supported program to encourage all postsecondary education elements in each state to get together for planning) -- have to face the central questions: To what extent do we <u>want</u> to plan, evaluate, and coordinate? To what extent <u>can</u> we plan, evaluate, and coordinate?

The answers are as variable and complex as the definitions of lifelong learning.

Each state, in finding answers to those questions, will operate on its own assumptions. I have five assumptions of my own and they do, of course, reflect my philosophy, style, experience, and attitude -- and prejudices/biases.

then what of programs which might be recreational in nature or simply for self-enrichment? Wont't these programs, in turn, seek justification for public support? Moreover, who is to pass judgment on a lifelong learner's motivation for participating in, let's say, a photography course. It is self-enrichment (read "to take pretty pictures") or learning to handle a job in a photo shop, or to be an artist? A plan for education of adults must encompass everything within its purview, regardless of the source of funding.

Fourth, how do we set priorities with our finite resources? Shall the individual's perceived needs dictate? Or manpower demands? Or national objectives? Or goals such as equal access and upward mobility? Or ...

Fifth, how do we guarantee quality as we take on this vast new audience? The planners and the evaluators often would like to do the job, but my own feeling is that quality control will be strongest at the local level. No bureaucrat, whether in the state-house or in Washington, can possibly make wise decisions about the quality of learning.

Sixth, how detailed should a plan be? Do we plan down to the individual program level or leave that to the institution? Do we specify problem areas such as energy, minorities and disadvantaged, professional licensure, or crime, and then arrange our priorities accordingly? The flip side of that proposition is the danger of becoming so global in our thinking, so flexible in our proposals, that our plans encourage everyone to do what they want

levels of bureaucracy; the variations among the states; the differences in structures, philosophies, methods of finance, and above all, personalities. Moreover, there are too many outside forces inhibiting the planning process: the economy may change, different political figures will emerge, and life styles and attitudes change -- often with little or no connection to the on-going educational process.

With these personal assumptions, let me raise ten questions that state planners will have to answer if we are to try to bring together our resources and our people to provide economical and high quality education for this new adult audience.

First, how shall we weigh individual need? Will student demands be more important than manpower needs? Will prospective students dictate priorities? Will tax dollars go for nonjob-oriented programs? Would a blanket voucher system (free enterprise's answer to demands for mass education) disrupt the planning process?

Second, to what extent will we permit duplication? Some duplication is good -- certain general education offerings and noncredit programs can easily be replicated, and at small cost. High-cost programs are another story. And in our efforts to take education to the people, how often and how close by shall we provide services in storefronts and new installations as an alternative to bringing all students to a central campus. Can we afford endless proliferation?

Third, will we plan only for those areas requiring tax dollars? If each jurisdiction decides what it will support with public moneys,

and universities have begun to change as the advit students begin to rap on their doors. So the question is, shall we take a chance on existing colleges and universities, hoping they can become multiple-purpose institutions embracing this new audience with the same enthusiasm they serve the traditional student? Or shall we supplement libraries, or create new agencies (the Reg. occupation programs come to mind) or respond to an idea floated by Asemblyman John Vasconcellos of California last year, that we set up a "fourth segment" in the form of Golden State College, an entirely new and independent institution to fill the educational gaps left by the indifference or hostility of the traditionalist?

Ninth, to what extent shall our institutions seek out new audiences as opposed to merely responding to those able to express their needs? Shall they be encouraged in their efforts to seek out in aggressive fashion the underserved minorities, the elderly, women with young children (perhaps on welfare), and persons stymied at a certain job classification? Not enough attention has been given to this. Too often we consider only the education of those who are clamorous enough to receive our attention. My own belief is that we have not yet reached millions who could benefit from further education.

Tenth, who shall pay for what? In California an adult citizen can take a wide variety of courses at no expense. They are paid for entirely with State dollars. But in the University of California and California State University and Colleges, no tax dollars are expended for extension programs. Their operations are expected to

anyway, thereby negating the planning efforts. This problem is aggravated and compounded as we move from the federal to the regional, to the state, and to the local levels. The more we pursue detailed plans, the more we promote inflexibility, this runs counter to the varying traditions, structures, and needs of different geographical areas.

Seventh, will our planning promote diversity of learning or merely extend traditional modes of instruction? Until now, we have, with a few major exceptions, extended to the adult our traditional methods of instruction and of assessing accomplishments. Credit for life experience, community-based education programs, computer-assisted instruction, cooperative education programs, some television offerings, a few independent study programs, and clinical training outside the classroom are encouraging examples of new concern for the learning process in contrast to traditional instruction.

Eighth, should our plans include the establishment of new institutions or agencies to reach the new adult audiences? Despite the newly discovered interest in adults by institutions, the fact remains that in many colleges and universities, especially at the departmental level, faculty are unresponsive to adult needs. It is understandable. Colleges and universities are traditional in outlook, in structure, and in measures of quality. For the most part, students are taught traditional subject matter in a traditional way, over a traditional time span. The emphasis is on formal classes, lectures, reading and examinations. And so it should be for traditional students seeking traditional objectives. Some colleges

be 100 percent self-supporting. I suppose from a taxpayer's standpoint it's no more unfair than the tuition differential between our three public segments -- free at the Community Colleges, $323 at the California State University and Colleges, and $600 at the University of California. However, even in the Community Colleges, the problem is more complicated. When should a program be financed with tax moneys and when should it be paid for by the student? Should a Los Altos banker with a baccalaureate degree pay nothing for a banking course to help him or her in his/her profession? Or should a poor person have to pay a high fee for a photography course simply because it was judged to be for self-enrichment and therefore to be paid for by the beneficiary? Can we ever find a taxonomy whereby rational decisions can be made as to what ought to be supported with tax moneys, and what ought not to be? If a community college offers its playground to a hospital to aid heart patients in recuperation and maintenance, should a jogger who runs to stay in good health be charged? And where do we stop in planning programs and their financing for adults? Shall we plan for crafts for fun, bridge playing, car mechanics, upholstering?

Who shall pay for what?

Eleventh, <u>how do we integrate the federal plans for lifelong learning with those of the state and the institutions?</u> At this Orlando conference we have heard representatives of four major federal programs — adult education, community service, and continuing education, lifelong learning, and education information centers -- all in one cabinet-level department, publicly confess

that they do not relate to each other in any significant way, not in program planning, development of regulations, or in their demands for plans and information from the states.

We can begin there. Each federal program is legislated independently of all the others. And each administration goes its own way. Somehow these forces at the federal level have to start planning and implementing together before they look to the states for support.

At the state level, we hear cries of protest that there are too many state plans, that the federal government ought to ask for a single state plan. I would worry about that degree of centralization. Diversity, one of my five assumptions, is still necessary. What the "feds" ought to do (after they get their own little houses in order) is to make sure the states have worked out the relationships and consultations within the states before the states present their several state plans to Washington. The states will do this gladly.

Most of us at the state-planning level do not want to restrain educational opportunity. Nor do we see ourselves as centralizing (read "tyrannical") forces usurping either the role of the institutions, or the proper role of the federal government. As we move to bring adults into the educational mainstream, we need a renewed partnership among the federal government, state governments, and the institutions. Only then will we be able to make any sense out of these multiplying planning processes.

At best, the states can contribute by being helpful, not hurtful, by acting as a catalyst, not a controller, by providing a statewide perspective, and by encouraging creativity. As the demands for adult

education, continuing education, and lifelong learning crowd in on us, we need that partnership in planning. And we need it soon, before we spend more billions of dollars on fragmented programs.